

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 376

By Yokley

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Kurt T. Steele upon being recognized as the 2008 Optometric Doctor of the Year by the Tennessee Optometric Association.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable health care professionals who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens and have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy professional is Dr. Kurt T. Steele, who was recently named 2008 Optometric Doctor of the Year by the Tennessee Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Steele serves with distinction as an optometrist, President of the Smoky Mountain Optometric Association, and as a member of the Board for the Continuing Education Committee of the Southeastern Council of Optometrists, which has the second largest international meeting every February in Atlanta, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, greatly admired by his fellow optometrists, Dr. Kurt Steele was voted as Tennessee's number one optometrist by the nearly 600 members of the Tennessee Optometric Association and accepted the award at the association's annual meeting at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg in August of 2008; and

WHEREAS, this annual meeting provides optometric doctors with the opportunity to attend classes and keep their licenses current; each doctor is required to complete thirty hours of work every two years, and Dr. Steele arranged and led educational classes for the meeting; and

WHEREAS, presenting Dr. Steele with the award, Dr. Jeff Foster described Dr. Steele as a “visionary individual who possesses a tireless work ethic for both community and professional service”; and

WHEREAS, upon receiving the award, Dr. Steele dedicated it to the members of the Tennessee Optometric Association who are in private practice, crediting the support he has received from Dr. Henry and Dr. Foster, as well as from all of the practice’s patients, saying, “It’s because of them that we are one of the State’s best groups;” he added that one of the best decisions he has ever made was moving to Cocke County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Steele is the second local optometrist to receive this prestigious honor; Dr. Jeff Foster, a member of Dr. Steele’s practice, was named Optometric Doctor of the Year in 1997; in accepting the award, Dr. Steele noted the rarity of two doctors from the same practice winning such a significant award; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kurt Steele was born in Martin on July 16, 1969, the same day Apollo 11 astronauts took off for the moon; like the Apollo mission, Dr. Steele was successful from the beginning; and

WHEREAS, at a young age, he moved with his family to Camden, where he remained until the end of high school; and

WHEREAS, a well rounded high school student, Kurt Steele played basketball, baseball, and golf, placing third in the district golf tournament and fifth in the state regional tournament during his senior year; and

WHEREAS, a leader among his peers even then, he was selected as a Delegate to Volunteer Boys State and was runner up for a Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizenship Award; he was also listed in *Who’s Who Among American High School Students*; and

WHEREAS, Kurt Steele put his time and many talents to good use as a member of the high school newspaper staff, the annual staff, and the Beta Club; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Dr. Steele graduated with honors from Union University in Jackson with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Marketing and a minor in Chemistry; and

WHEREAS, he was an active member of his campus community, becoming involved with its chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, which he served as Pledge Educator, Chronicler, and Scholarship Chairman; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kurt Steele also devoted his time to membership in the Alpha Chi Honor Society, Sigma Zeta National Honorary Science Fraternity, Phi Beta Lambda Honorary Business Fraternity, and the Public Relations Club; he served on the Dorm Council, and made the Dean's List, and was named in *Who's Who Among American College Students*; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Union University, Dr. Steele went on to become a 1995 graduate of the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, as he had done in high school and during his time at Union University, Dr. Steele devoted much of his time at the Southern College of Optometry to extracurricular involvement and a variety of leadership roles; he stood as Chairman of the optometry students' national meeting, held in Memphis in 1994; he also served as Treasurer of the Contact Lens Society and was a member of the Tennessee Student Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Dr. Steele moved to Newport after a brief association with St. Mary's Hospital in Knoxville; now an esteemed resident of Newport, he is a partner to Dr. Jeff Foster and an associate of Dr. Jeremy Diamond; and

WHEREAS, their practice was established in 1950 by Dr. Nathan Ford, who was later joined by Dr. William B. Henry; Dr. Steele has been with this practice since 1996, one year after he graduated from the Southern College of Optometry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Steele began his professional service as a Trustee to the Tennessee Optometric Association Board from the East Tennessee Optometric Society in 1997, and he continued to serve in this capacity until 2000; in 1999, he was named Young Optometric Doctor of the Year by the Tennessee Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, a widely respected leader in his field, Dr. Kurt Steele went on to stand as President of the Tennessee Optometric Association from 2003 until 2004; and

WHEREAS, he is the founder of the Smoky Mountain Optometric Society, of which he is the current President; a member of the Tennessee Academy of Optometry; and Chairman of the Board of Advisors for the TLC Tri-Cities Center; and

WHEREAS, a man of many talents, Dr. Steele has also served as a lecturer for TLC, the Tennessee Optometric Association, Cibavision, and the Tennessee Academy of Optometry; he is a proud member of the American Optometric Association and its Low Vision Society, as well as the Southern Council of Optometrics; and

WHEREAS, he also serves on the Southeastern Council of Optometrics Education Committee and helps arrange classes when the group gathers at its annual Atlanta meeting every February; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Steele epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor, as he is active in numerous community and civic organizations in addition to his many professional achievements and contributions; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kurt Steele is an active community leader in Newport, having served on the Board for the Newport Kiwanis Club and as the club's President from 1999 to 2000; he continues to chair the club's annual golf tournament, the proceeds of which are donated to needy children in the community; and

WHEREAS, he is past President of the United Way and past Chairman of its Board of Directors; he has also given generously of his precious time as a member of the consult staff at the Cocke County Baptist Hospital; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, he was honored as Kiwanian of the Year in both 1998 and 1999, just two of the many honors he has earned for his exemplary work; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kurt Steele is a faithful and active member of the First United Methodist Church in Newport; and

WHEREAS, he is thankful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife of eleven years, Sacha Florence Steele, a Camden native who directs the Science Laboratory Studies at Edgemont Elementary School in Newport; and

WHEREAS, when he is not working in his office or volunteering in his community, Dr. Steele enjoys golfing and caring for his rescue pug named Chance; he is an avid supporter of all University of Tennessee sports, as well as the Tennessee Titans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kurt Steele is an exemplary public servant and an astute professional who has dedicated himself to improving the quality of life for others, and he is undoubtedly deserving of the honor of 2008 Optometric Doctor of the Year; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Dr. Kurt Steele for his enthusiastic and meritorious service to the optometric profession and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Dr. Kurt T. Steele upon being named 2008 Optometric Doctor of the Year by the Tennessee Optometric Association, commend his unwavering leadership and stalwart service to the State of Tennessee, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.